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ABSTRACT

The idea of public library film circuits was first proposed by the Carnegie Corporation in 1947. In 1948, one of two three-year grants was given to the Missouri State Library for the development of a statewide film circuit. Film packages of four to nine films were circulated among eleven libraries. Early conflicts with the University of Missouri's film distribution system and problems with overspent grant funds were overcome. Policies were created and film packages were tailored to audiences. The project was a success at the grant's expiration in 1951. With growing enthusiasm (32 participating libraries) and state funding, the project continued as the Missouri Libraries Film Cooperative. In 1954, participating libraries took over funding the Cooperative, and by 1966, the number of films grew to 955. Serious problems with film maintenance threatened the Cooperative until 1966, when state funds were available. Now (1975), the total collection exceeds 3,800 films. Member librarians still pay, but now according to assessed valuation of the library and the population served. Film utilization, still considered a problem, is being overcome with workshops for members. An edited interview with the former director of the Missouri State Film Demonstration Project (1948-50) provides a personal view of early film circulation in Missouri. (DAG)

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THE MISSOURI LIBRARIES FILM COOPERATIVE: ITS ORIGINS, HISTORY AND GROWTH

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THE MISSOURI LIBRARIES FILM COOPERATIVE: ITS ORIGINS, HISTORY AND GROWTH

The idea for public library film circuits in the United States was Florence Anderson's. Ms. Anderson was Assistant Secretary of the Carnegie Corporation back in 1947. The Corporation had just given the American Library Association a grant to hire Patricia Blair, former head of Cleveland Public Library's enormously successful Film Bureau, as ALA Film Advisor. Her mission was to stimulate and guide the nationwide development of public library film service. Ms. Anderson, having researched the educational film movement prior to the awarding of the grant, was concerned that small libraries wishing to bring films to their communities could not afford to develop adequate collections. In discussions with the Film Advisor, Ms. Anderson suggested the solution might lie in emulating Canadian experiments she had learned of in her investigations wherein packages of films were rotated among regional libraries. Might not small U.S. libraries pool their funds, acquire films cooperatively and circulate packets of films from one small library to the next? A large public library in the area could serve as the administrative center and distribution hub. Ms. Blair agreed and began working on plans for experiments that would test the feasibility of the idea.

In May 1948, the Carnegie Corporation awarded grants for two demonstrations. One grant was to the Cleveland Public Library for the development of a Film Circuit that would serve suburban libraries in northern Ohio. The other grant was to the Missouri State Library for the development

of a statewide film circuit. Both projects were highly successful and have persisted, albeit in altered form, until the present day. The Missouri circuit has experienced extraordinary growth and expansion of its services. It may be of value to examine the way it has developed and to identify reasons for its success.

Why Missouri Was Selected

Missouri, a largely rural state with many small cities, was a logical choice for the experiment. Under the leadership of a dynamic, progressive State Librarian, Kathryn Mier, public library service had been expanding since World War II with an energy and rapidity that attracted nationwide attention. Outreach programs had been initiated that sent bookmobiles to farming communities and to "backwoods" areas of the Ozarks. In an effort to reach non-readers, these bookmobiles were equipped with 16mm projectors and films were shown at bookmobile stops - often to people who had never seen a motion picture. Missouri was anxious to participate in the experiment, and its record of achievement in library services suggested it would exert every effort to make the demonstration a success.

The Experiment Begins

With the assistance of Patricia Blair, Kathryn Mier prepared a proposal that was submitted to the Carnegie Corporation in April 1948. According to the proposal, the Missouri State Library would receive a grant totaling $15,000 (payable in annual installments of $7,500, $5,000, and $2,500) for the purchase of films. Participating libraries would contribute an additional $250 each year. Film packets would circulate from one library to the next, returning in the summer to the State Library for inspection and repair.

At the end of each year, the packets would be divided. Each participant would receive permanent possession of five titles; the remainder would go to

the State Library for the establishment of a spot booking collection. At the end of the three years, member libraries would have small permanent collections and the State Library would have a rather substantial spot booking collection which would continue to be developed in the future.[1]

Ms. Anderson, responding to the proposal, commended Ms. Mier on her intention to keep plans for the demonstration "flexible" and noted, "It might be found impracticable, for example, to set up permanent film collections in the member libraries, since the saturation point for most films is reached quickly in small communities."[2]

In actual practice, the circuit that developed was somewhat different from the one proposed. S. Janice Kee, a Regional Field Consultant for the State Library, was placed in charge of the project. She designed the program that was actually implemented and established policies that led to the long term and continued success of the undertaking.

An important difference between the Cleveland experiment and the Missouri one was that there was no pre-existing film department in the State Library into which the circuit could be plugged. While Cleveland merely added the devising and administering of their circuit to the already awesome responsibilities of the Film Bureau, the Missouri circuit had to start "from scratch" creating a philosophy for the project as well as practical policies. Decisions made at the very start of the project have had long term value shaping the nature and success of the cooperative that evolved from these beginnings.

On July 11 - 12, 1948, an informal meeting of Librarians interested in the project was held in the state capitol, Jefferson City, and provisions of

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[1] Mier, Kathryn P. "Proposal - State Demonstration Missouri State Library" April 21, 1948.

[2] Anderson, Florence. Letter to Kathryn P. Mier, April 23, 1948.

the first contract were decided upon. An important decision was that film packages would be routed to the State Library each month for inspection since proper maintenance "would be impossible" if films progressed from library to library as specified in the proposal.[1] The importance of this move can not be overestimated. The ill will engendered among participants of other film circuits by the transmission of damaged films has been cited as a major problem severely corrosive of overall morale.[2]

Another important decision was Ms. Kee's conviction that a "philosophy of democratic administration was to be applied."[3] While the Cleveland Film Bureau assumed almost complete responsibility for planning and administration of their circuit and for film selection, the Missouri program required member libraries to actively participate in planning and decision making. Monthly "preview parties" were held in various parts of the state; here films considered for purchase were screened and voted on. "A preview party hardly ever ended without one closed business meeting in which the participating librarians discussed problems and formulated and recorded policies."[4] Librarians were further encouraged to participate in regional and national audiovisual programs, workships and conventions. As a result, a strong sense of involvement and enthusiasm was generated which established a firm basis for the subsequent development of the cooperative as an independent organization.

By September 1, 1948, contracts had been signed by nine county libraries and the St. Louis Public Library. The State Library was an eleventh participant subscribing to a packet for use in the bookmobiles. On September 27, the first

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[1] Kee, Sarah Janice, Cooperative Film Service Through Public Libraries Demonstrated by a Project in Missouri, 1948 - 1951. (Unpublished thesis, Denton, Texas State College for Women, 1951), p. 25.

[2] Sager, Don, "A Case History in Cooperation...the Northern Onio Regional Film Circuit," OLA Bulletin XXXVIII (July, 1968), 8 - 14.

[3] Kee, p. 27.

[4] Kee, p. 31.

packets were distributed. They contained only four films each. By November 24 the size of the packets had increased to nine films apiece.[1]

Problems Emerge

The experiment seemed off to a good start, but almost immediately serious difficulties emerged. The Adult Education and Extension Division of the University of Missouri had only recently started to develop a film collection with the intent of providing spot bookings to adult groups throughout the state. They viewed the circuit as a threat and potential competition for film users and state funds. It demanded a high level meeting to determine who in Missouri would distribute films to adults.[2]

Even more serious, it was discovered in Fall 1948 that Ms. Mier "in her enthusiasm for and devotion to the program for library extension in the state" had been overspending her budget.[3] She was forced to resign. S. Janice Kee was named Acting State Librarian. A "freeze" was then imposed on all State Library funds. The Carnegie Grant was included in this "freeze" causing a financial crisis for the fledgling project.

In response to these difficulties, Ms. Anderson flew to Missouri on January 25, 1949. She went to the State Attorney General's Office where she managed to get the grant funds released. The following day she met with administrators of the University of Missouri and made some progress in mollifying the Extension division by assuring them the State Library was not planning to build up a large spot-booking collection and by suggesting the library promotion of films would in fact lead to increased demands for the Extension Division's films.

In writing to Ms. Kee, Ms. Anderson emphasized the importance of

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[1] "Calendar of events and report." Unpublished, July 1, 1949.

[2] Kee, p. 33.

[3] M.L.A. Quarterly, IX (December, 1948), 73-74.

cooperating with the University people "even though you may have to go more than half way." Furthermore, she discouraged the spot-booking and the permanent collection aspects of the original proposal. "In small communities the saturation point for a film is reached too quickly to warrant purchase...In this particular experiment we are trying to see whether [the State Library] can successfully act as a coordinating center to keep a group of films moving from one small depository to another and to stimulate their proper use."

The Success of the Circuit

With these difficulties out of the way, the experiment began in earnest - policies being created and altered as needed. Packages were designed to contain films for adults, for young adults, and for children, but there was constant emphasis on the fact that the main objective of the program was reaching the adult population with educational films. Each packet contained films on current affairs, homemaking, health, safety, agriculture, conservation and child care. A few "discussion type" films were kept at the state capitol for spot-booking, but they were not extensively used. Indeed, one of the disappointments of the project - to Ms. Kee and the participating librarians - was that discussion films were less popular in general than purely entertainment and informational films. Librarians had been conditioned by the Film Forums experiments of the early forties[1] to view the generation of discussion as the highest - most legitimate - library use of films. However, Missouri viewers tended to prefer viewing of films without formal discussion. "Films have been shown and not used" lamented Ms. Kee in her final appraisal of the program.

[1]The Film Forum Demonstration Project was another Carnegie Corporation funded experiment which, at the start of World War II, introduced the first large scale, coordinated use of films in public libraries and set the stage for the public library film movement.

Yet the people did respond to the program - attending showings in great numbers and commenting enthusiastically. Sixteen millimeter projectors were rare in Missouri in those days and more than half the film showings of the circuit films were either under library auspices or with library projectors and projectionists.

The project was viewed by Ms. Kee as a part of the overall extension program of the State Library. She devoted approximately a third of her time to the program and a clerical worker devoted a third of his time to routing and inspection of films.

Ms. Kee resigned from the State Library in 1950. She was replaced as Assistant State Librarian and Film Administrator by William Quinly. In her 1951 Master's Thesis[1] Ms. Kee analyzed the development of the project and reported the enthusiastic reactions of participating librarians. They felt the circuit had, by providing cheap and convenient access to substantial numbers of films, enabled them to reach the non-reading public, to serve community groups and churches, to improve the public image of the library, and, by reaching people who never charged out books, to overcome opposition to the library tax.

In his report to the Carnegie Corporation upon the expiration of the grant in 1951, Mr. Quinly characterized the project as "a tremenduous success." He noted the project - which began with ten libraries, added three more in 1949 and another three in 1950 - would continue "without interruption" and with twenty-two libraries participating. Through these "1,403,756 Missourians, or over 35% of the state's entire population" would have access to films.

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[1]Op. Cit.

The Missouri Libraries Film Cooperative Forms

One of the reasons the experiment succeeded and was continued was the great espirit de corps that had been generated among the participating librarians. Patricia Blair, attending a "preview party" at the new audiovisual library of the Kansas City Public Library in October 1950, noted "the democratic, vital and pioneer spirit of the group is very evident and admirable."[1]

It was decided that the project should continue under the official name: Missouri Libraries Film Cooperative. Since most member libraries could ill afford increased contributions, the $25 per annum contribution was not increased.

However, when the new contracts were signed in July 1951, the State Librarian informed the Cooperative that the State Library could not indefinitely absorb the administrative costs. He asked that plans be developed for the Cooperative to become independent and self sustaining.

By 1953 details of a plan for continuance of the Cooperative as a permanent, independent entity were evolved. In late August, membership (now numbering thirty-two libraries) met in Jefferson City to draft a constitution and by-laws and to draw up a new plan of operation. On March 4, 1954, a Jefferson City circuit court judge granted incorporation making the Cooperative a legal corporate body capable of owning property.

The new corporation was governed by an elected seven member Board of Directors. An administrator, Ms. Thelma Davis, was hired to carry out policies of the Board, to handle business details and matters relating to maintenance of the collection, to arrange preview sessions, and to prepare catalogs. Rent-free space was donated by Springfield Public Library.

[1] AIA Film Newsletter, October 5, 1950.

With the State Library no longer subsidizing the project, it was decided monthly inspection must be sacrificed and packets began to move directly from one library to the next. Members were expected to keep films in their possession in good repair. Once every nine months to a year films returned to the Cooperative for thorough inspection, cleaning, and repair. Initially, commercial film laboratories contracted to do these periodic overhauls; eventually inspection facilities were developed at the Springfield headquarters.

In 1958 fees were raised to $300 a year, and new members were required to pay $900 their first year and $600 the second. Subscribing libraries became voting members of the Cooperative. Annual business meetings were held and members continued to select new films at periodic preview sessions.

As older and less popular films were weeded from packets, a spot-booking collection did begin to evolve. In 1960, there were 204 films in this collection.

During the years 1954 to 1966, the Cooperative continued to grow and serve its constituents. In 1966, the Missouri Libraries Film Cooperative owned 955 films - 700 in packets and 255 in the spot-booking collection. Substantial film collections had developed in four large Missouri libraries (Kansas City, St. Louis, St. Louis County, and the Mid-Continent Public Library). Most other libraries in the state that provided films to their patrons did so through their participation in the Cooperative.

In 1966, the Cooperative was ready to enter a second period of innovation and growth. Thanks, this time, to the Library Services and Construction Act.

The Inspection Center Moves to Mid-Continent

The Board of Directors began to formulate a request for LSCA funds

to renovate the film collection. This would include a thorough weeding - replacing old and inferior titles with films of the highest quality and currency. It would also involve an experiment in vitalizing the spot-booking collection - turning it from a mediocre collection of discards into a large collection of quality films that could truly supplement the packets and enlarge the entire scope and value of the Cooperative.

But could the Cooperative, with its one room at Springfield Public Library, handle this expansion? Even that room was in danger - Springfield Public Library was having its own growing pains. It needed the space.

A solution was found - partly through the efforts of John Ferguson. Mr. Ferguson had been a page at Springfield Public and was greatly interested in MLFC. Now he was Assistant Librarian at the Mid-Continent Public Library - a system with headquarters in Independence that serves Jackson, Clay and Platte Counties. Mid-Continent had a film collection administered by Ms. Mary McPherson. It had space, staff, and electronic cleaning and inspection equipment. It was proposed the spot-booking and the inspection aspects of the MLFC be transferred to Mid-Continent and that MLFC reimburse MCPL for its services. This move was made in November 1966. Administrative services remained in Springfield under Ms. Davis until her retirement in 1972. At that time, Ms. McPherson assumed Ms. Davis' responsibilities and all services were transferred to Independence.

The request for LSCA funds was made on September 8, 1966. It was granted and the Cooperative was to receive $275,000 over a period of five years. Work began in earnest - massive planning, weeding, screening, working to improve and update packets and to build up the spot-collection. By fiscal year 1970-71, the number of films in packets had risen from 700 to 980, and the

spot-collection had grown from 255 films to 1418.

The cooperative agreement with MCPL was working well. MCPL benefitted by having access to the spot-booking collection of the Cooperative. In return the MCPL collection was made available for spot-booking to members of the MLFC. Furthermore, the increased staff and facilities made it possible to reinstate the monthly inspection of films.

This was important since maintenance of films had become a serious problem causing, according to Ms. McPherson, "constant quarrels" and "bad feelings" between participants. A similar problem has afflicted the Northern Ohio Regional Film Circuit which developed out of the Cleveland experiment. In a 1968 article, Don Sager, then chief librarian of Elyria Public Library where the circuit collection is housed,[1] reported that "great resentment exists between some members of the circuit because of criticism received either rightly or wrongly on inspection. Various members have threatened to drop out of the circuit because of this criticism, and only the equity invested in the collection has kept them in the circuit."[2] (Sager also indicated the lack of "a positive administrative policy" was a stumbling block for the circuit. "Perhaps the best organization . . . would have been incorporation as a non-profit organization, with the administrators of the member libraries serving as a board of directors. An administrator could then have been hired to handle the full operation with sufficient authority delegated to provide some development."3)

Missouri Libraries Film Cooperative members now have films in their libraries fifty-two weeks a year. They receive new packets on the day they mail their old ones back to the Independence headquarters. Each packet now

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[1] Cleveland Public Library withdrew in 1953.

[2] Sager, Op. Cit., p. 13

[3] Idem, p. 14.

contains fifteen films. In 1975, there were 106 packets with mail out and return dates scheduled by computer.

MLFC Today

After the first LSCA grant expired, a second grant - this time $500,000 - was awarded. At the time the information for this article was being gathered precise information about the size of the collection was not available, but it was estimated that, in 1975, the total collection exceeded 3800 films, including over 2000 titles in the spot collection.

To insure the continued viability of the Cooperative, a massive increase in members' contributions has been instituted. It is a measure of the success and real value of the Cooperative that members, by and large, have been willing to accept these fees. According to the new scheme, a member's contribution is based on two factors - the assessed valuation of the library and the population served. In 1975-76, seven of the thirty-four member libraries paid less than $1,000 a year, twenty-two libraries paid between $1,000 and $4,000, three libraries paid between $4,000 and $6,000, and two libraries paid in excess of $6,000 a year. As soon as the contribution exceeds $1,000, the library is entitled to another packet. Thus, the highest paying library, which is assessed $6,656 a year, receives seven packets a month or 1,410 films a year. The smallest library pays $206 a year and receives 180 films a year. In addition, both have free access to the superb spot-booking collection.

The spot-booking collection has enjoyed heavy and increasing use. Records for the period July 1974 - May 1975 showed the smallest number of bookings occurring in August (600), while in April the number of bookings exceeded 1,100. Spot-bookings are made by collect calls to the Cooperative. Films are sent by mail. There is no charge to the library other than for postage. While

the member library is free to charge borrowers a fee, this is very uncommon. Most libraries do not even charge an insurance fee.

Among the most popular films are thirty-eight feature films held on long term lease. These include King Kong, Citizen Kane, National Velvet, and Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory.

Schools are the major users of circuit films but they are prohibited from using the spot-booking collection. Public libraries that do not belong to the Cooperative may sign a contract which allows them to borrow up to twenty-five films a year from the spot collection at a fee of $4.00 apiece.

Ms. McPherson discharges her enormous responsibilities with the assistance of the equivalent of 3.5 full-time clerical employees. All are employees of Mid-Continent and enjoy the employee benefits thus available. Costs are reimbursed by the Cooperative.

Among Ms. McPherson's most important and onerous responsibilities is arranging the annual preview session. She pre-selects films to be screened using published reviews, suggestions from librarians and information from sales representatives. In recent years, the preview session has been held in Kansas City's Sheraton Royal Hotel. About 250 titles are evaluated with screenings conducted concurrently in five different rooms. The usual procedure is for librarians to view ten minutes of a film and then vote on it. If anyone requests it, the entire film is shown. Screenings begin on Wednesday and continue through Thursday. Friday morning is devoted to the annual business meeting. Hospitality offered by various film companies helps make these sessions memorable and enjoyable.

Film utilization is still considered a problem. There is a felt need for more education of the participating librarians so that greater assistance

may be given to patrons in selecting films and planning programs. To help meet this need, the cooperative has offered a number of workshops for participants in recent years.

Conclusion

The Missouri Libraries Film Cooperative has been an extraordinary success. The first state-wide film circuit, it subsequently became an independent corporation and has never stopped growing. In recent years, it has developed an outstanding spot-booking collection which supplements the films available in the circuit packages. MLFC has been an impressive model of cooperation - between member libraries, between the Cooperative and the State Library, between the Cooperative and non-member libraries (notably the Mid-Continent Public Library).

What factors have led to this success? Carnegie funds and federal funding, state level support, careful planning, participation by members, creative leadership, the provision of adequate resources for the expert day to day administration of the program. Above all, massive quantities of work, enthusiasm, dedication, and ingenuity have made the Missouri Libraries Film Cooperative the remarkable achievement it is.

BRINGING FILMS TO THE PEOPLE: THE FIRST STATE-WIDE FILMS CIRCUIT - MISSOURI 1948 - 51

by

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IR 004 408
Appendix

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BRINGING FILMS TO THE PEOPLE: THE FIRST STATE-WIDE FILM CIRCUIT - MISSOURI 1948 - 51.

(The following is a condensed and edited version of an interview with S. Janice Kee. Ms. Kee was the director of, and largely responsible for the success of, the Missouri State Library Film Demonstration Project during the years 1948 to 1950. This was the first state-wide film circuit ever attempted. It was one of two experimental public library film circuits funded by the Carnegie Corporation at that time. The other was the Cleveland Film Circuit which demonstrated the feasibility of cooperative film service among a group of suburban libraries. These circuits were the inspiration of Ms. Florence Anderson of the Carnegie Corporation and Ms. Patricia Blair, the A.L.A. Film Advisor. This interview took place on June 11, 1975 in Dallas, Texas. - Joseph W. Palmer)

P: Could you tell me how Missouri was chosen to be the recipient of the Carnegie Grant?

K: The State Librarian, Kathryn Mier, had been employed at A.L.A. headquarters before she came to Missouri. She knew Patricia Blair quite well. Patricia Blair was the A.L.A. Film Advisor at the time. Through Kathryn Mier's acquaintance with Patricia, she was, I suppose you might say, "tipped off" to the fact the Carnegie Corporation might experiment with a state-wide circuit.

Also, I think there was another reason. There was a constitutional convention in Missouri just before I went there. I think the convention must have been in 1944 or 1945. Missouri was one of the first states to have written into its revised constitution state responsibility for the development of public library service. Kathryn Mier was in large part responsible for getting this little sentence in. Once this was done, the state started giving aid to develop county libraries.

We had the Post War Standards in those days which talked about larger

units of public library service. And larger than a municipality was a county. We in Missouri approached the development of larger units by first getting county taxes voted. The state was divided into four sections and there were four field consultants charged with the responsibility of interesting people in county tax for county-wide library service. I was one of those field consultants. One year - I think in 1947 - seventeen counties voted the tax. And this was such an exciting development that it got national attention. Carl Milam, the Executive Secretary of A.L.A., invited us to have breakfast with him in San Francisco at the annual Conference, which was a great honor and a great exciting adventure for we Missouri field workers. He said to Kathryn Mier: I want to see the people that pulled this off. And, oh, this was a great, great day for us. Maybe this attention was part of the reason Missouri was considered for the circuit.

Many of these county libraries were in farming areas and mountainous areas and in very rural areas of the Ozarks where people had practically no experience with books of any kind. We operated bookmobiles in these counties and one of our policies was to have them equipped to show films. This was before the film circuit and it may also have contributed to the Carnegie Corporation's interest in us.

P: Why were they equipped to show films?

K: Because many of the people we were contacting were non-readers or they read poorly if at all. Today when we talk about out-reach programs, programs for people who are reluctant to use traditional libraries, I often go back to this experience in the Ozarks and remote areas of Missouri where we serve people at poverty levels who had no books but were very excited about these films.

This is just a little anecdote but it shows you how things happen. In April 1948 I had some rather serious surgery. I had been travelling - working in those campaigns - and I became ill. So I just wasn't able to travel and work at the pace I had been. But I could do desk work. Kathryn Mier said to me, I think I'm going to get this grant. I wonder if you'd like to take over this program. I said, But Miss Mier I don't know anything about films. She said, Well there aren't a handful of people in the country who know anything about films for public libraries. You can learn.

So, for a year or two - well, all the time I was in charge of the film circuit - I attended all the meetings of what was then called DAVI - the Division of Audiovisual Education of NEA. And the EFLA meetings. And I

went to Chicago to Encyclopedia Brittanica and to Coronet and to everyplace I could think of. I read the literature. I looked at films. I just grew with it. I had to. This is what most public librarians in the business were doing in those days.

Now, the film circuit. I think it important to emphasise that the members participated in selecting the films. We brought in the public librarians to preview and select the films. And when they went back home they'd have preview sessions for community leaders and leaders of local organizations and help them set up programs. When the film package arrived, the county librarians were ready for it. They knew the films because they had selected them.

Now, I have been disassociated from the film world for years and years, but when I was State Librarian in Wisconsin from 1956 to 1965 a film circuit was developed and it was, and still is, directed by Jane Younger who was a Missouri county librarian during the film project. There is also a film service in the Oklahoma State Department of Libraries set up by one of those county librarians, Esther Mae Henke.

P: You see how these seed projects spread their roots.

K: You know libraries didn't accept film as a library material until World War II and the years immediately following it. The industry was growing at that time. Projectors began to be produced at a reasonable price and they were not so heavy. We had to have lightweight projectors in our bookmobiles.

Companies like Encyclopedia Brittanica and Coronet began to develop films for classroom instruction. We used many of these. Nature films and travel films were particularly popular. The bookmobile itself was exciting. We tried to stock them with books of adult interest but at an easy reading level as far as we could. The film program was used to attract people to the bookmobile, to stimulate interest in learning and widening horizons and that sort of thing. We showed films at the bookmobile stops. We would go to these county school houses at night and have a program. The school would be packed with people.

P: In your Master's Thesis you say as the librarians got more sophisticated about films "fewer films were considered really useful". What did you mean by that?

K: I have to put that in the context of our overall objective: adult education. There were few good films for adult education. We were using classroom films because it was all we could find. Julian Bryan was one of the great film

producers in those days. Some of his films were controversial but they stimulated people. They stimulated discussion. And they were beautiful.

P: The main thrust in those days was adult education?

K: We tried to emphasise service to adults but community needs often included schools. The county librarians made a very special effort to program films through adult organization channels. They would notify leaders that the film package had come and here's a list of what's in the package. They'd try to stimulate interest. In those days we were trying very hard to distinguish public library service to school children from public library service to adults. We tried to emphasise service to adults.

We encouraged showing the film and having a discussion - really getting the full benefits from the film. We didn't always get this. I think we have to recognize that a lot of people don't want to be educated...They may want to but they don't want to admit they do...They'll go look at something but they don't want to be pressed for opinions or pressed for discussion. There are people who are spectators in adult education. As distinguished from real participants. Some people don't want to be bothered with hearing everyone's opinion and making up their own mind.

P: Do you think it's more true today? Do you think television had conditioned people to just passively receive things?

K: Not only television but sports. This is such a sports oriented part of the country.

P: In terms of participants or observers?

K: As spectators. You know: go look, go look. Dare I suggest it is a kind of illness of society? For instance, the current problems of government. Many people don't want to dig in and learn what's wrong and do something about it. They say, let's not talk about it. I'm not going to vote because it's no use and that kind of talk.

P: Is that what you meant in your thesis when you said one of the shortcomings of the project was that "films have been shown and not used?"

K: I was disappointed in Missouri when films were just shown. I felt films ought to stimulate people to think and to talk and to act - to become enlightened citizens and make better decision, and so on.

P: In preparing yourself to administer the film circuit, did you use the services of the A.L.A. Film Advisor?

K: Oh yes. Quite a bit. Pat Blair came to Missouri often. We were in close

touch with her at all times. Of course, she was learning too. Everyone was learning in those days.

P: Looking beyond Missouri, do you think the A.L.A. Film Advisor and the A.L.A. Film Office played a very important role in developing film service in public libraries in the nation as a whole?

K: They did indeed. By stimulating interest in films, publishing film lists, helping us find films, and by giving A.L.A.'s blessing to this new direction in library service. The Film Office was very, very valuable indeed. I regretted seeing it abolished.

P: The Film Office was also funded by the Carnegie Corporation. In fact, even the Film Forums of the early forties that started the whole business of films in public libraries were Carnegie funded. It seems doubtful that public library film service would be anywhere near where it is today if it wasn't for these Carnegie grants.

K: I agree.

P: Has Missouri changed?

K: I left Missouri in 1950. I worked for A.L.A. for a few years, and then was Wis onsin State Librarian. The last few years I've been working for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

P: You provided pretty strong guidance in the Missouri situation.

K: More guidance than I see exercised now in the film programs. I don't know whether it's because I was very conscientious and realized I was in a national demonstration, but I was doing everything I knew to carry out the objectives of adult education through public libraries using films, which was a new idea. I do think the Missouri film circuit set the pattern for many other film circuits.

P: What was the main function of the film service in Missouri?

K: We tried to reach the unreached. To stimulate their interest in learning and reading and so on. It was a great experience.

We were so rural. Our films went out into the hinterlands, into the backwoods of the Ozarks, into the farm areas of Missouri. In those days they had an awful lot of rural one room schools. I have wonderful Kodak pictures of the kinds of roads we travelled with those bookmobiles. We took them on roads that ... I just don't know how we made it. Fording creeks and all the rest of it. In some places people had never seen motion pictures before. Of course they'd never seen bookmobiles.

I could tell you many stories of how men would come out of their farm wagons - they'd come in farm wagons to the school where we were showing films - and come peer into the bookmobile. I remember so well one man saying: I'm not interested in books, but I just want to see this truck. I said, Oh, please do come in. And I showed him where the motor was. In passing through the little bookmobile - these were not big bookmobiles, they were small bookmobiles - they had to be to make the roads, - his eye fell on a book in the travel section on Okinawa. He had had a son killed during the war in Okinawa and, of course, this struck a chord with him. And he took the book and told me about his son. He said, I've always wanted to know more about that place. I said, why don't you take this book. So he did and he became a very good friend of ours and a user. But the idea was it was the truck that got him to come inside. We found this happened a lot with the films too. They'd come just out of curiosity and then they'd find they really liked watching films. Sometimes we would get discussion. But often they would be very shy. The people were very shy because it was all so new to them.

They learned something about the outside world from those films. We showed travel films to people who hadn't been a hundred miles from where they lived in their whole lives. I don't believe I've ever in all my career in librarianship had a more satisfying experience than the four years I spent in Missouri. Things were moving. We had this new state aid program, libraries were being established and along came the film. We were a great close knit group of librarians. We worked hard together. Everybody worked hard. It was very hard work. Libraries were established with the tax and they'd get a librarian and a bookmobile and start building something. There was a great spirit of building and experimenting and reaching out and all these good things.

I'm sure the Missouri experience in the forties was outstanding. I can't overestimate the role of Kathryn Mier. The State Library Commission was a dead agency when she took it over - I think in 1944. I went there in 1946.

Kathryn left Missouri when it was discovered that in her zeal, she had been overspending her budget. I can't tell you how much I owe to her as a motivator, as a leader, as a person to really fire people up about libraries and library services. She did this to me. When I went there, I was interested in libraries but I wasn't all fired up to kill myself; which is what I almost did in Missouri- because it was such hard work. But such exciting work!

When Kathryn left, I was Acting State Librarian for ten months. The State Library Commission came to me and asked me if I would serve until they could find a man. I was a direct object of discrimination against women. I had invested so much blood, sweat and tears in the state's library program, I agreed to try to hold it together, for I loved Missouri. If this hadn't happened, I might still be in Missouri for all I know. Because I really loved it.